OUR "INSPECTION TRIP" TO FLORIDA

By DEAN E. A. HITCHCOCK

Editor's note: Dean and Mrs. Hitchock have just returned from a six-weeks' trip to Florida, the longest vacation the Dean has had in the ten years since he assumed the deanship. Before that his longest absence from the campus was in 1924 when he took five weeks off to attend the World Power Conference in London.

Early on a Friday morning, with a miniature blizzard playing up our back alley, Mrs. Hitchcock and I rolled out of the garage bound for the sunny South, via West Jefferson, Xenia, and Cincinnati. As we went along we noticed the promise of warmth, and by the time we reached Cincinnati the snow had disappeared, the sun was shining, and we were very light-hearted. We were off to visit some great engineering projects in Dixie, many of them operated by Ohio State men, to observe a number of colleges and universities, and to find out whether Florida was the land of promise and the fountain of youth that we had always heard it was. Besides we had heard of the vast improvement in the roads of the South, and an inspection of the highways was part of our program.

In crossing the Ohio River into Kentucky we were introduced to the bridge-toll system which continued throughout our entire trip. We paid out $5.25 in tolls for 15 crossings. The rates varied from 15 cents at Cincinnati to 80 cents in Florida. This is purely incidental, however, and should not deter anyone from taking such a trip. Just to show something of the cost, for our 4875 miles of driving we bought 345 gallons of gasoline. The entire trip was made without a soft tire, but there were three simple cases of mechanical difficulty, one-third due to the car, one-third due to the garage man, and one-third to the driver. The total delay was not over three hours.

At Lexington we visited the University of Kentucky to call upon our old-time and very genial friend, E. Paul Anderson, dean of the Engineering College. He was in New York, but we visited his office and saw something of his interesting experiments on the growth of plants and animals under the various kinds of glass that admit ultraviolet rays. We discovered one very pleasant feature of a college of engineering, a large students' club room in the engineering building, incidentally very convenient to the Dean's office. That's a good suggestion for the designers of our engineering quadrangle here at Ohio State.

The road through Kentucky is good and the scenery as you approach Cumberland Gap is very interesting. That's an historic region where tales and legends abound of Daniel Boone and other pioneers and famous Indian fighters. We were interested in history for that's a part of an engineer's inspection of life, but we pressed right on through Knoxville to Alcoa, Tennessee, where is located the very large reduction plant of the Aluminum Company of America. Here our most delightful host was an Ohio State man, V. J. Hultquist, class of 1907, city manager of Alcoa (note the spelling) and superintendent of construction for the company. New plants and additions to existing plants, which would cover more than 20 acres of ground, were in process of construction

The Dean Picks His First Orange.

under Mr. Hultquist's general supervision. On a beautiful new road through the Great Smokies toward Bryson City, North Carolina, Mr. Hultquist showed us one of the Company's new developments (the third in this region) an immense dam and power plant on the Little Tennessee River. Here an arched tunnel 1800 feet long, 28 feet high and 28 feet wide, through solid rock and lined with concrete not less than a foot thick, brings water from the dam to the power house. The penstocks are 16 feet in diameter and made of steel 1½ inches thick to stand the pressure produced by 200 feet of water.

The next engineering stopping point was at the building of the Tennessee Electric Power Company in Chattanooga where three Ohio State men hold responsible positions. Then we visited some more Ohio State men, professors in Georgia Tech. at Atlanta. Up to this point we had encountered only eight miles of road that could be called rough. In southern Georgia, which has a reputation for poor roads, we made 160 miles in four hours.

You can see the roads averaged pretty good all the way, but as soon as we crossed the Florida line, they were superexcellent, wide, and almost level as the floor. Between the State line and Lake City we had a great disappointment. We crossed the Suwannee River and found it to be an uninviting stream with dark murky waters whose banks were lined with trees bent like old men and bearded with long streamers of gray Spanish moss.

At Jacksonville we saw the beauties of the alligator farm, some of them, according to the signs, 400 years old. How they know that we do not know. We drove along west of the St. Johns River and crossed the famous Shands Bridge, 2⅕ miles long, to St. Augustine where we saw the famous house and fort of the oldest settlement in the country and drank of the Fountain of Youth. I drank copiously and Mrs. Hitchcock sparingly because she did not need to do so. St. Augustine is a quaint looking place with many

(Continued on Page 17)

THE DEAN'S TRIP

(Continued from Page 6)

one-way streets. Going along the coast we observed the gulls, for many gulls are said to indicate good fishing. In the Indian River region we had a great thrill picking our first oranges. Inland, near DeLand and Orlando, there were thousands of acres of celery. We passed the unpretentious house of John D. Rockefeller at Ormond, and drove along the famous beach at Daytona, but like Kay Don we found the sands wavy and didn't attempt to break any speed records.

Judge Chillingworth, a classmate of mine who had made the reach at the same boarding house when we were in college together, was our host at West Palm Beach. I had not seen him for 40 years. We had some deep-sea fishing, but a heavy sea was running that sometimes threatened to stand the 38-foot boat on end, so we had poor luck and did not really try out the pivoted chairs, belts with sockets, reel with brakes and locks and other paraphernalia that goes with gunning for sailfish. A side trip of 120 miles took us to the sugar mill south of Lake Okeechobee where the Southern Sugar Company can make 400 tons of sweetness a day from cane that grows 15 feet high, and 60 tons to the acre. A sugar plant is a great engineering feat. This plant was reported to be the most modern sugar mill in the United States. All the planting was done by machinery and the hauling was by truck. The ground cane (called bagasse) is now burned under the boilers, but is raw material for celotex and another plant will be erected to turn it into that. When that is done the sugar will become the by-product.

Trucks and tractors simply abound in Florida, swarming along the smooth level roads. So flat is the country that a crossing built up over a railway is about the nearest approach to a hill that we saw in the peninsula part of the state. The highest point in Florida is supposed to be Iron Mountain at the Bok Singing Tower, 324 feet above sea level.

Miami we found to be the metropolis and air capital of Florida. It is interesting to see the great three-motored liners come in every evening from Havana and the passengers go through quarantine and customs before taking the train for New York. Here we had the pleasure of going over the beautiful private yacht of another Ohio State engineer, Mr. Charles F. Kettering. On this little ship that carries a crew of 20 Mr. Kettering and some of his friends had recently completed a trip to the Galapagos Islands.

It was our ambition to drive as far south as we could and stay on land. Making good our ambition carried us to Lower Matecumbe Key, 20 miles from the mainland where tourists take the ferry for Key West. Then we turned north again to Miami and drove west over the celebrated Tamiami Trail, through the Everglades 146 miles to Ft. Myer. For 45 miles the road was absolutely straight. There was no monotony to the trip, though, for ditches alongside were alive with fish. We saw strange birds, and plants, and photographed the belle of a Seminole village, who wore a bushel of beads about her neck and shoulders and whose only English expression was "Money." At Ft. Myer, Thomas A. Edison and Henry Ford have winter homes, fairly modest houses with beautiful grounds.

When winter comes, circus days are over in the North. The clowns, elephants, giraffes, lions, and all the other animals of Ringling Brothers spend their winters in Florida, at Sarasota where we next stopped. Circus money has made many improvements at Sarasota, among them a $2,000,000 art gallery.

We saw much of beauty and interest along that Gulf coast: sponge fisheries at Tarpon Springs where divers go down 180 feet, the ferry across Tampa Bay from Piney Point to St. Petersburg, the playground of the tourist, the class that likes shuffle-board, miniature golf, checkers, and sitting in the sun, beautiful shells along the Gulf everywhere, shells that for color and diversity of design make those on the Atlantic side seem scarcely worth picking up. This inspection trip would not have been complete without trying our luck at fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. At 15 miles from shore and in 50 feet of water over a coral reef the men in our party had a total catch of 30, but my best catch was a good coat of sunburn.

Driving back toward the north we crossed the celebrated Gandy Bridge, nearly six miles long counting approaches, between St. Petersburg and Tampa, and went through the strawberry country near Lakeland, visited the Bok Singing Tower at Lake Wales, and sailed in a glass-bottomed boat on the river that rises at Crystal Springs, reported by the Geological Survey as the largest spring in America, with a flow of 800 cubic feet of water per second. At Gainesville we visited the University of Florida with its 2,300 students, all men, and the finest radio station owned by a university. The Florida State College for Women is at Tallahassee. This is a beautiful school, one that we can highly recommend to girls who are set on going to a school that is not coeducational, and who like a land of sunshine.

The contrast between building activity in North Florida, which was not overbuilt during the boom, and the slackness in building activity farther south was very noticeable.

(Continued on Page 18)

THE DEAN'S TRIP

(Continued from Page 17)

In Alabama we had our only trying drive of the trip—about 60 miles of newly graded road; it was supposed to be gravel and clay, but after a hard rain it seemed all clay. We visited Montgomery, the capital of the Confederacy, and stood on the spot where Jefferson Davis was inaugurated president.

Birmingham is the Pittsburgh of the South. Here iron ore, coal, and limestone have been found near together and a great industry has developed. Birmingham is a highly industrial city. Another Ohio State engineer, Mr. E. W. Robinson, the superintendent of transmission and distribution of the Alabama Power Company, entertained us here. We saw the famous Mitchell Dam on the Coosa River. Then we drove on to the northeast corner of Alabama and visited the great Wilson Dam and power plant at Muscle Shoals. Driving north from here we passed through the fine farming district of Tennessee, saw phosphates being mined by strip methods near Mt. Pleasant, and went on to Nashville where we spent a few hours with another Ohio State engineer.

Driving east from Nashville we passed the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's home. I had the pleasure of visiting the power plant at Rock Island that had been built when I was with the Tennessee Power Company, and from here I telephoned to my friends in Chattanooga over a 110,000 volt line. A year ago the largest flood on record swept that valley, the Caney Fork of the Cumberland, convincing the hydraulic engineers that to be on the side of safety they need to add something to previous flood records.

From Rock Island we drove to Alcoa, crossing the Cumberland Mountains, and closing the circuit that we had started about six weeks before. The return through Cumberland Gap, Lexington, and Cincinnati, was uneventful, and when we got back to Ohio we found almost the kind of weather that we had been enjoying in Florida.